

SITUATING ETHICS: HOW NORMATIVITY SHAPESHIFTS AS TECHNOSCIENCE TRANSMOGRIFIES

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Abstract:

As technoscientific developments and practices are taken up and adapted in new contexts, how do normative frameworks of governance and social values move with them? Debates tend to focus on whether there exists or should exist a special domain of ethics for certain technologies, for example nano-ethics (Swiestra and Rip 2007) or AI/ML (Greene et al. 2019). While some look at traveling models more generally (Pfothenauer and Jasanoff 2017; Delvenne and Rosscamp 2021), STS has paid less attention to how ethical, moral, political, or other normative frameworks travel alongside or depart from technoscientific developments as they move from one space to another. What is borrowed, changed, and created anew when routines of normative sense-making are constituted in spaces where they are seen as lacking? For instance when ELSI frameworks travel away from their human genetic, national, and institutional origins, or bioethics are applied to more-than-human life forms? Or when RRI and models of participation are reproduced in settings outside of culturally and institutionally stabilized traditions of liberal democracy (Frahm et. al. 2021)? Or in shifting interactions in more-than-human worlds and shared environments (Whyte and Cuomo 2017)? Or ethics out of time and place, where the authority of ethics meets refusal and contestation (Benjamin 2016)?

We invite papers investigating the movement, translation, and elision of ethical frameworks and normative discourses. Abstracts might consider:

- The perceived need for ethics of a particular kind in some spaces and not others
- Rigidity of framing devices that steer normative deliberations around specific kinds of technologies
- How normative frameworks transform or maintain particular configurations when applied to human applications versus non-human applications
- How notions of responsibility are translated between disciplines and applications
- Ways the increasingly popular imperative of “public engagement” is differentially instantiated
- Mobilization of ethical discourses in the service of particular objectives

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